GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3385
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2002
DEVELOPMENT OF HIV/AIDS VACCINES
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pilot project to develop HIV/AIDS Vaccines has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the institutions and departments in India involved in the research on HIV/AIDS;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether NARI has achieved some success in this regard; and

(f) the details about the efforts, action plan, finance for the research on HIV/AIDS medicines/vaccines?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT)

(a) to (d) : Under a National Jai Vigyan Science and Technology Mission, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) launched a project towards development of candidate DNA/ recombinant vaccines for HIV-I Subtype `C`, the most prevalent type in the country. The gene (DNA) sequences of the candidate vaccine have yielded encouraging results in small experimental animals. These are being evaluated in the non-human primates. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi; three Institutes of the Indian Council of Medical Research, i.e. National AIDS Research Institute, National Institute of Virology, Pune; National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED), Kolkata and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore are implementing these projects. Also, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, National Institute of Immunology and National Institute of Communicable Diseases, New Delhi; Central Jalma Institute for Leprosy, Agra; Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh; National Centre for Cell Science, National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) and National Institute of Virology Pune; Christian Medical College, Vellore; Tuberculosis Research Centre, Chennai; National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad; Institute of Immunohematology and Institute for Research in Reproduction, Mumbai are associated to work on different aspect of HIV infection. Ministries of Science & Technology and Health & Family Welfare are supporting research in HIV/AIDS.

(e) : NARI, Pune has identified early sero-converters and amplified genes from them. Using vaccinia vectors, the animal experimentation has been planned. A Viral Repository supported by DBT with more than 90 fully characterised HIV isolates is functional and catering to the needs of the scientists.

NARI is also collaborating with NICED, Kolkata and International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) towards identification of suitable vaccine strains with the intramural funding from Indian Council of Medical Research; this will be also funded by IAVI. The work is under progress to insert six HIV genes in a vector.

(f) : The research on HIV/AIDS would continue to get support from the government. The promising candidate vaccines will be further evaluated in human volunteers after mandatory clearance from the Drugs Controller General of India. Under the INDO-US Vaccine Action Programme (VAP), research and development for HIV/AIDS vaccines is a high priority. Research towards identification of anti-HIV compounds/medicines, has also been initiated at some of the research centres in the country. Two low cost, highly sensitive and specific diagnostic kits developed through DBT support have been commercialized.